

James Madison to John Quincy Adams, October 16, 1810. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO JOHN QUINCY ADAMS. MAD. MSS.

Washington Octr. 16th 1810

Dear Sir Previous to my return to his City, I received a letter from Mrs. Adams, your highly respectable mother, communicating your anxiety to leave a situation¹ rendered insupportable by the ruinous expences found to be inseparable from it, and

¹ He was then Minister to Russia, having been appointed the year before.

taking it for granted that you had written or would write to the Secretary of State to the same effect. The answer to her was, that as it was not the intention of the Executive to expose you to unreasonable sacrifices, it could not withhold a permission to retire from them, and that you would be so informed from the Department of State. You will accordingly receive a letter of leave, and a blank Commission, providing for the care of our affairs, till a successor may be appointed. As no communication of your wishes, however, has yet been received from yourself, I cannot but hope, that the peculiar urgency manifested in the letter of Mrs. Adams was rather hers, than yours; or that you have found the means of reconciling yourself to a continuance

in your station. Besides that confidence in the value of your services which led to the call upon them, there are considerations which you will readily appreciate, bearing against a sudden return, from a short mission; the occasion for which has been made the subject of so much lucubration. Among them, is the difficulty of shielding the step

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against unfavorable conjectures as to its cause in the mind of the Emperor; and the evil might become the greater, from the possibility of a protracted intermission, if not entire discontinuance, of a representation of the U. S. at St Petersburg, corresponding with the grade of the Russian Minister here. It will for this reason, be particularly expedient, in case you should make immediate use of the document sent you, to spare no pains, in guarding against a misconstruction of your departure, and in preparing the Russian Government for a delay in filling the vacancy; which may be unavoidable, notwithstanding the purpose of preventing it. As far as assurances of unabated friendship here, can be of aid to you, they may be given with every emphasis which the sincerity of these sentiments can warrant.

I will add that whilst I do not disguise my wish that the continuance of your valuable services, may be found not inconsistent with your other and undeniable duties; I cannot, on the other hand, wish that the latter should be sacrificed, beyond a reasonable measure; and within that measure, I am entirely persuaded that your patriotism will cheerfully make the sacrifice.

Accept my sincere respects and friendly wishes